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GREGORY
DAMER'S GOLD:
A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS





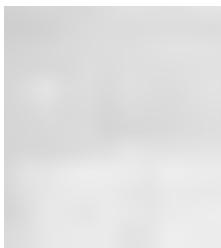




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DAMER'S GOLD
A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS



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DAMER'S GOLD

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

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Damer's Gold

A Comedy in Two Acts

By
Lady Gregory, Isabella

G. P. Putnam's Sons
London and New York

MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN

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G5D3

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LADY GREGORY

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DAMER'S GOLD
A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

PERSONS

<i>Patrick Kirwan</i>	.	.	.	CALLED DAMER
<i>Staffy Kirwan</i>	.	.	.	HIS BROTHER
<i>Delia Hessian</i>	.	.	.	HIS SISTER
<i>Ralph Hessian</i>	.	.	.	HER HUSBAND
<i>Simon Niland</i>	.	.	.	THEIR NEPHEW

DAMER'S GOLD

ACT I

Scene: The kitchen in Damer's house. Outer door at back. Door leading to an inner room to right. A dresser, a table, and a couple of chairs. An old coat and hat hanging on the wall. A knocking is heard at door at back. It is unlatched from outside. Delia comes in.

Delia: (Looking round cautiously and going back to door.) You may come in, Staffy and Ralph. There would seem to be no person here.

Staffy: Take care would Damer ask us to cross the threshold at all. I would not ask to go pushing on him, but to wait till he would call to us himself. He is not an easy led man.

Delia: (Crossing and knocking at inner door.) He is not in it. He is likely slipped out unknownst.

Ralph: Herself that thought to find him at the brink of death and nearing his last leap, after what happened him with the jennet. We heard tell of it as far as we were.

Delia: What ailed him to go own a jennet, he that has means to stable a bay horse would

set the windows rattling on the public road, and it sparkling over the flintstones after dark?

Staffy: Sure he owns no fourfooted beast only the dog abroad in its box. To make its way into the haggard the jennet did, the time it staggered him with a kick. To forage out some grazing it thought to do, beyond dirt and scutchgrass among the stones. Very cross jennets do be, as it is a cross man it met with.

Delia: A queer sort of a brother he is. To go searching Ireland you wouldn't find queerer. But as soon as I got word what happened I bade Ralph to put the tacklings on the ass. We must have nature about us some way. There was silence between us long enough.

Ralph: She was thinking it might be the cause of him getting his death sooner than God has it promised to him, and that it might turn his mind more friendly like towards us, he knowing us to be at hand for to settle out his burying.

Delia: Why would n't it, and we being all the brothers and sisters ever he had, since Jane Niland, God rest her soul, went out last Little Christmas from the troubles and torments of the world.

Staffy: There is nothing left of that marriage now, only one young lad is said to be mostly a fool.

Delia: It is ourselves can bear witness to that, where he came into the house ere yesterday, hav-

ing no way of living, since death and misfortune scattered him, but as if he was left down out of the skies.

Ralph: He has not, unless the pound piece the mother put into his hand at the last. It is much she had that itself. The time Tom Niland died from her, he did n't leave her hardly the cat.

Staffy: The lad to have any wit around him he would have come travelling hither along with yourselves, to see would he knock any kindness out of Damer.

Ralph: It is what herself was saying, it would be no advantage to him to be coming here at all, he being as he is half light, where there is nothing only will or wit could pick any profit out of Damer. She did not let on to him what side were we facing, and we travelling out from Loughtyshassy.

Staffy: It is likely he will get tidings as good as yourself. It is said, and said largely, Damer has a full gallon jar of gold.

Ralph: There is no one could lift it—God bless it—they were telling me. Filled up it is and brimmed to the very brink.

Staffy: His heart and his soul gone into it. He is death on that gallon of gold.

Delia: He would give leave to the poorhouse to bury him, if he could but put in his will they should leave it down with his bones.

Staffy: A man could live an easy life surely and that much being in the house.

Delia: There is no more grasping man within the four walls of the world. A strange thing he turning to be so ugly and prone to misery, where he was reared along with myself. I have the first covetous person yet to meet I would like! I never would go thrusting after gold, I to get all Lord Clanricarde's estate.

Ralph: She never would, only at a time she might have her own means spent and consumed.

Staffy: The house is very racked beside what it was. The hungriest cabin in the whole ring of Connemara would not show out so empty and so bare.

Delia: (*Taking up a jug.*) No sign in this vessel of anything that would leave a sign. I 'll go bail he takes his tea in a black state, and the milk to be rotting in the churn.

Ralph: (*Handling a coat and hat hanging on a nail.*) That 's a queer cut of a hat. That now should have been a good top-coat in its time.

Delia: For pity's sake! That is the top-coat and the hat he used to be wearing and he riding his long-tailed pony to every racecourse from this to the Curragh of Kildare. A good class of cloth it should be to last out through seventeen years.

Staffy: The time he was young and fundless

he had not a bad reaching hand. He never was thrifty but lavish till he came into the ownership of the land. It is as if his luck left him, he growing timid at the time he had means to lose.

Delia: Every horse he would back at that time it would surely win all before it. I saw the people thronging him one time, taking him in their arms for joy, and the winnings coming into his hand. It is likely they ran out through the fingers as swift nearly as they flowed in.

Staffy: He grew to be very dark and crabbed from the time of the father's death. His mind was on his halfpenny ever since.

Delia: (*Looking at dresser.*) Spiders' webs heaped in ridges the same as windrows in a bleach of hay. What now is that there above on the upper shelf?

Ralph: (*Taking it from top shelf.*) It is but a pack of cards.

Staffy: They should maybe be the very same that brought him profit in his wild days. He always had a lucky hand.

Delia: (*Dusting them.*) You would give your seven oaths the dust to have been gathering on them since the time of the Hebrews' Flood. I'll tell you now a thing to do. We being here before him in the house, why would n't we ready it and put some sort of face upon it, the way he would be in humour with us coming in.

Ralph: And the way he might incline to put into our hand some good promise or some gift.

Delia: (*Dusting.*) I would wish no gift from any person at all, but that my mind is set at this time on a fleet of white goats and a guinea-hen are to be canted out from the Spanish woman at Lisatuwna cross by reason of the hanging gale.

Staffy: That was the way with you, Delia, from the time you could look out from the half-door, to be coveting pictures and fooleries, that would shape themselves in your mind.

Delia: There is no sin coveting things are of no great use or profit, but would show out good and have some grandeur around them. Those goats now! Browsing on the blossoms of the bushes they would be, or the herbs that give out a sweet smell. Stir yourself, Staffy, and throw your eye on that turf beyond in the corner. It is that wet you could wring from it splashes and streams. Let you rise the ashes from the sods are on the hearth and reddens them with a goose-wing, if there is a goosewing to be found. There is no greater beauty to be met with than the leaping of a little yellow flame.

Staffy: In my opinion there will no pay-day come for this work, but only a thank-you job; a County Clare payment, 'God spare you the health!'

Delia: Let you do it, Ralph so. (*Takes pota-*

toes from a sieve.) A roasted potato would be a nice thing to put before him, in the place of this old crust of a loaf. Put them in now around the sods, the way they will be crispy before him.

Ralph: (*Taking them.*) And the way he will see you are a good housekeeper and will mind well anything he might think fit to give.

Delia: (*At clock.*) I 'll set to the right time of day the two hands of the clock are pointing a full hour before the sun. Take, Staffy, that pair of shoes and lessen from them the clay of the land. That much of doing will not break your heart. He will be as proud as the fallen angels seeing the way we have all set out before him.

(*A harsh laugh is heard at inner door. They turn and see Damer watching them.*)

Ralph: Glory be to God!

Delia: It is Damer was within all the time!

Staffy: What are you talking about, Delia? It is Patrick you were meaning to say.

Damer: Let her go on prattling out Damer to my face, as it is often she called it behind my shoulders. Damer the chandler, the miser got the spoil of the Danes, that was mocked at since the time of the Danes. I know well herself and the world have me christened with that nickname.

Ralph: Ah, it is not to dispraise you they put it on you, but to show you out so wealthy and so rich.

Damer: I am thinking it is not love of my four bones brings you on this day under my thatch?

Staffy: We heard tell you were after being destroyed with a jennet.

Damer: Picking up newses and tidings of me ye do be. It is short the delay was on you coming.

Delia: And I after travelling through the most of the day on the head of you being wounded and hurt, thinking you to be grieving to see one of your own! And I in dread of my life stealing past your wicked dog.

Damer: My joy he is, scaring you with his bark! If it was n't for him you would have me clogged and tormented, coming in and bothering me every whole minute.

Delia: There is no person in Ireland only yourself but would have as much welcome for me to-day as on the first day ever they saw me!

Damer: What 's that you are doing with my broom?

Delia: To do away with the spider's webs I did, where the shelves were looped with them and smothered. Look at all that came off of that pack of cards.

Damer: What call had you to do away with them, and they belonging to myself? Is it to bleed to death I should and I to get a tip of a billhook or a slasher? You and your vagaries to have left me bare, that I would be without

means to quench the blood, and it to rise up from my veins and to scatter on every side!

Delia: Is it that you are without e'er a rag, and that ancient coat to be hanging on the wall?

Damer: The place swept to fitters! What is that man of yours doing and he handling my turf?

Ralph: It was herself thought to be serviceable to you, setting out the fuel that was full of dampness where it would get an air of the fire.

Damer: To dry it is it? (*Seizes sods and takes them from the hearth.*) And what length would it be without being burned and consumed and it not to be wet putting it on? (*Pours water over it.*) And I after stacking it purposely in the corner where there does be a drip from the thatch.

Ralph: She but thought it would be more answerable to you being dry.

Damer: What way could I bear the expense of a fire on the hearth and it to leave smouldering and to break out into a blaze? A month's cutting maybe to go to ashes within three minutes, and into wisps of smoke. And the price of turf in this year gone wild out of measure, and it packed so roguish you could read the printed speeches on the paper through the sods you do be buying in the creel.

Staffy: I was saying myself not to meddle with it. It is hurry is a worse friend than delay.

Damer: Where did you get those spuds are roasting there upon the hearth?

Ralph: Herself that brought them out from the sieve, thinking to make ready your meal.

Damer: My seed potatoes! Samples I got from the guardians and asked in the shops and in stores till I'd gather enough to set a few ridges in the gardens would serve me through the length of the year!

Delia: Let you be satisfied so with your mouldy bit of loaf. (*Breaks a bit from it and hands it to him.*)

Damer: Do not be breaking it so wasteful! The mice to have news there was as much as that of crumbs in the house, they would be running the same as chickens around the floor!

Ralph: Thinking to be comfortable to you she was, the way you would make us welcome from this out.

Damer: Which of ye is after meddling with my clock?

Delia: It was a full hour before its time.

Damer: It to be beyond its time, would n't that save fire and candles sending me to my bed early in the night? Leave down those boots! (*Takes them from Staffy.*) Is it that you are wearing out the uppers with scraping at them and scratching! Is it to rob me ye are come into this place?

Damer's Gold

11

Delia: I tell you we only came in getting word
that you were done and dying.

Damer: Ha! Is it to think I was dying ye
did? Well, I am not. I am not so easily quenched.
Strength and courage I have, to keep a fast grip
of what I own.

Delia: Let you not be talking that way! We
are no grabbers and no thieves!

Damer: I have it in my mind that ye are.
Very ravenous to run through my money ye are.

Delia: The world knows I am not ravenous!
I never gave my heart to silver or to gold but only
to the thing it would bring in. But to hold from
me the thing my heart is craving after, you might
as well blacken the hearth.

Damer: Striving to scare me out of my courage
and my wits, the way I 'll give in to go making
my will.

Ralph: She would not be wishful you to do that
the time your mind would be vexed.

Damer: I 'll make it, sick or sound, if I have a
mind to make it.

Delia: Little thanks you 'll get from me if
you make it or do not make it. That is the naked
truth.

Damer: The whole of ye think yourselves to
be very managing and very wise!

Delia: Let you go will it so to an asylum for
fools.

Damer's Gold

Damer: Why would n't I? It is in the asylums all the sense is these times. There is only the fools left outside.

Delia: You to bestow it outside of your own kindred for to benefit and comfort your soul, all the world will say it is that you had it gathered together by fraud.

Staffy: Do not be annoying him now.

Delia: I will not. But the time he will be lying under the flagstone, it is holly rods and brambles will spring up from out of his thorny heart.

Damer: A hasty, cranky woman in the house is worse than you to lay your hand upon red coals! I know well your tongue that is as sharp as the sickle of the moon!

Delia: The character you will leave after you will be worse out and out than Herod's!

Damer: The devil upon the winds she is! That one was born into the world having the use of the bow and arrows!

Delia: You not to give fair play to your own, it is a pitiful ghost will appear in your image, questing and craving our prayers!

Damer: I know well what is your aim and your drift!

Delia: I say any man has a right to give thanks to the heavens, and he having decent people to will his means to, in place of people having no call to it.

Damer: Whoever I 'll will it to will have call to it!

Delia: Or to part with it to low people and to mean people, and you having it to give.

Damer: Having it to give is it? Do you see that lock on the door?

Delia: I do see it and have eyes to see it.

Damer: Can you make any guess what is inside of it?

Delia: It is likely it is what there is so much talk about, your own full gallon of gold.

(Ralph takes off his hat.)

Damer: Lay now your eye to that lock hole.

Ralph: *(Looking through keyhole.)* It is all dusky within. It fails me to see any shining thing. *(Staffy and Delia put their eyes to key-hole but draw back disappointed.)*

Damer: If you cannot see it, try can you get the smell of it. Take a good draw of it now; lay your head along the hinges of the door. So now ye may quit and scamper out of this, the whole throng of ye, robbers and hangmen and bankbreakers, bargers and bad characters, and you may believe me telling you that is the nearest ye ever will come to my gold! *(He bangs back into room locking door after him.)*

Delia: He has no more nature than the brutes of the field, hunting and howling after us.

Staffy: Yourself that rose him out of his wits

Damer's Gold

and his senses. We will sup sorrow for this day's work where he will put curses after us. It is best for us go back to my place. It may be to-morrow that his anger will be cured up.

Ralph: I thought it was to lay him out with candles we were brought here. I declare I came nearer furnishing out a corpse myself with the start I got.

Delia: There is no dread on me. When he gets in humour I will tackle up again to him. It is too far I came to be facing back to Loughty-shassy and I fasting from the price of my goats! Little collars I was thinking to buckle around their neck the same as a lady's lapdog, and maybe so far as a small clear-sounding bell.

(They go out, Damer comes back. He puts on clock, rakes out fire, picks up potatoes and puts them back in sieve, takes bread into his room. There is a knock at the door. Then it is cautiously opened and Simon Niland comes in, and stands near the hearth. Damer comes back and sees him.)

Damer: What are you looking for?

Simon: For what I won't get seemingly, that is a welcome.

Damer: Maybe it's for fists you are looking?

Simon: It is not, before I will get my rest. I could n't box to-night if I was the Queen of England.

Damer: Have you any traffic with that congregation is after going out?

Simon: I seen no person good or bad, but a dog and it on the chain.

Damer: You to have in you any of the breed of the Kirwans that is my own, I 'd rise the tongs and pitch you out from the door!

Simon: I suppose you would not begrudge me to rest myself for a while. (*Sits down.*)

Damer: I 'll give leave to no strolling vagabond to sit in any place at all.

Simon: All right so. (*Tosses a coin he takes from his pocket, tied in a spotted handkerchief.*)

Damer: What 's that you 're doing?

Simon: Pitching a coin I was to see would it bid me go west or east.

Damer: Go toss outside so.

Simon: (*Stooping and groping.*) I will after I will find it.

Damer: Hurry on now.

Simon: Wait till I 'll kindle a match. (*Lights one and picks up coin.*)

Damer: What is that in your hand?

Simon: You should know.

Damer: Is it gold it is?

Simon: It is all I have of means in the world. I never handled a coin before it, but my bite to be given me and my bed.

Damer: You 'll mind it well if you have sense.

Simon: It is towards the east it bade me go.
I 'll travel as far as the races of Knockbarron
to-morrow.

Damer: You 'll be apt to lose it going to races.

Simon: I 'll go bet with it, and see what way
will it turn out.

Damer: You to set all you own upon a horse
that might fail at the leaps! It is a very foolish
thing doing that.

Simon: It might not. Some have luck and
are born lucky and more have run through their
luck. If I lose it, it is lost. It would not keep me
long anyway. I to win, I will have more and
plenty.

Damer: You will surely lose it.

Simon: If I do I have nothing to get or to fall
back on. It is some other one must take my
charges.

Damer: A great pity to go lose a gold sovereign
to some schemer you never saw before.

Simon: Sure you must take some risk. You
cannot put your hands around the world.

Damer: It to be swept by a trick of the loop
man!

Simon: It is not with that class I will make free.

Damer: To go lose the whole of it in one second
of time!

Simon: I will make four divides of it.

Damer: To go change it into silver and into

copper! That would be the most pity in the world.

Simon: I'll chance it all upon the one jock so.

Damer: Gold! Believe me it is a good thing to hold and a very heartbreak the time it is lost. (*Takes it in his hand.*) Pure gold! There is not a thing to be got with it as worthy as what it is itself! There is no comfort in any place and it not in it. The Queen's image on it and her crown. Solid between the fingers; weighty in the palm of the hand; as beautiful as ever I saw.

Simon: It is likely it is the same nearly as any other one.

Damer: Gold! My darling it is! From the hollows of the world to the heights of the world there is no grander thing to be found. My bone and my marrow! Let me have the full of my arms of it and I'll not ask the flowers of field or fallow or the dancing of the Easter sun!

Simon: I am thinking you should be Damer. I heard said Damer has a full crock of gold.

Damer: He has not! He has not!

Simon: That is what the world says anyway. I heard it as far as the seaside.

Damer: I wish to my God it was true!

Simon: Full and brimming to the brink. That is the way it was told.

Damer: It is not full! It is not! Whisper

now. It is many a time I thought it to be full, full at last, full at last!

Simon: And it was n't after?

Damer: To take it and to shake it I do. It is often I gave myself a promise the time there will be no sound from it, I will give in to nourish myself, I will rise out of misery. But every time I will try it, I will hear a little clatter that tells me there is some space left; some small little hole or gap.

Simon: What signifies that when you have so much in it?

Damer: Weightier it gets and weightier, but there will always be that little sound. I thought to stop it one time, putting in a fistful of hayseed; but I felt in my heart that was not dealing fair and honest with myself, and I rose up and shook it out again, rising up from my bed in the night time. I near got my death with the cold and the draught fell on me doing that.

Simon: It is best for me be going on where I might find my bed,

Damer: Hearken now. I am old and the long road behind me. You are young and in your strength. It is you is rich, it is I myself that is poor. You know well, you to get the offer, you would not change your lot with my own.

Simon: I suppose I might not. I 'd as lief keep my countenance and my run.

Damer: Is n't it a great pity there to be that

hollow within in my gallon, and the little coin
that would likely just fill it up, to be going out
of the house?

Simon: Is it that you are asking it of me?

Damer: You might never find so good a way
to open Heaven to yourself with a charity. To be
bringing peace to an old man that has not long
to live in the world! You would n't think now
how quiet I would sleep, and the good dreams
would be going through me, and that gallon jar
to be full and to make no sound the time I would
roll it on the floor. That would be a great deed
for one little pound piece to do!

Simon: I 'll toss you for it.

Damer: I would not dare put anything at all
upon a chance.

Simon: Leave it alone so. (*Turns away.*)

Damer: (*Seizing him.*) It would make such
a good appearance in the little gap!

Simon: Head or harp?

Damer: No, I 'm in dread I might lose.

Simon: Take your chance or leave it.

Damer: I to lose, you may kill me on the
moment! My heart is driven down in the sole
of my shoe!

Simon: That is poor courage.

Damer: There is some shiver forewarning me
I will lose! I made a strong oath I never would
give in again to try any sort of chance.

Damer's Gold

Simon: You did n't make it but with yourself.

Damer: It was through my luck leaving me I swore against betting and gaming.

Simon: It might turn back fresh and hearty where you gave it so long a rest.

Damer: Well—maybe—

Simon: Here now.

Damer: I dare not.

Simon: (*Going to door.*) I 'll make my bet so according to a dream I had. It is on a red horse I will put it to-morrow.

Damer: No—stop—wait a minute.

Simon: I 'll win surely following my dream.

Damer: I might not lose.

Simon: I 'm in dread of that. All turns to the man is rich.

Damer: I 'll chance it!

Simon: You said no and I 'll take no.

Damer: You cannot go back of your word.

Simon: Let me go out from you tempting me.

Damer: (*Seizing him.*) Heads! I say heads!

Simon: Harps it is. I win.

Damer: My bitter grief! Ochone!

Simon: I 'll toss you for another.

Damer: You will not. What 's tosses? Look at here what is put in my way! (*Holds up pack of cards.*)

Simon: Where 's the stakes?

Damer: Wait a second. (*Goes into room.*)

Simon: Hurry on or I won't stop.

Damer: Let you not stir out of that! (*Comes back and throws money on table.*)

Simon: Come on so. (*Shuffles cards.*)

Damer: Give me the pack. (*Cuts.*) I did n't feel a card between my fingers this seven and a half-score years!

Simon: Spades are trumps.

Damer: (*Lighting candle.*) I 'll win it back! I won't begrudge spending a penny candle, no, or two penny candles! I 'll play you to the brink of day!

Curtain

ACT II

The next morning. The same kitchen. Simon Niland is lying asleep on the hearth. Ralph and Staffy are looking at him.

Staffy: Who is it at all is in it?

Ralph: Who would it be but Simon Niland, that is come following after us.

Staffy: Stretched and sleeping all the same as if there was a pin of slumber in his hair, as in the early times of the world. The day passing without anything doing. That one will never win to a fortune.

Ralph: It would be as well for ourselves maybe he not to be too great with Damer.

Staffy: Will Delia make any headway I wonder. She had good courage to go face him, and he abroad on the land, sitting stooped on the bent body of a bush.

Ralph: I wonder what way did that lad make his way into this place. Wait now till I 'll waken and question him. (*Shakes Simon.*)

Simon: (*Drowsily.*) Who is that stirring me?

Ralph: Rouse yourself up now.

Simon: Do not be rousing me, where I am striving to catch a hold of the tail of my last dream.

Staffy: Is it seeking for a share of Damer's wealth you are come?

Simon: I never asked and never looked for it.

Staffy: You are going the wrong road to reach to it.

Simon: A bald cat there was in the dream, was keeping watch over jelleries in a cave.

Staffy: No person at all would stretch out his hand to a lad would be rambling and walking the world, and it in its darkness and sleep, and be drowsing and micing from labour through the hours the sun has command of.

Delia: (*At the door.*) Is it that ye are within, Staffy and Ralph?

Ralph: We are, and another along with us.

Delia: Put him out the door!

Ralph: Ah, there's no danger of him coming around Damer. He is simple and has queer talk too.

Delia: Put him out I say! (*Pushes Simon to door.*) Let him drowse out the day in the car shed! I tell you Damer is at hand!

Ralph: Has he the frown on him yet?

Staffy: Did his anger anyway cool down?

Delia: He is coming I say. I am partly in dread of him. I am afeard and affrighted!

Ralph: He should be in terrible rages so.

There was no dread on you yesterday, and he cursing and roaring the way he was.

Delia: He is mad this time out and out. Wait now till you 'll see!

(*She goes behind dresser. Damer comes to the door. Staffy goes behind a chair. Ralph seizes a broom.*)

Damer: (At door.) Are you acquainted with any person, Ralph Hessian, is in need of a savage dog?

Staffy: Is it that you are about to part Jubair your dog?

Damer: I have no use for him presently.

Staffy: Is it that you are without dread of robbers coming for to knock in your skull with a stone? Or maybe out in the night it is to burn you out of the house they would.

Damer: What signifies, what signifies? All must die, all must die. The longest person that will live in the world, he is bound to go in the heel. Life is a long road to travel and a hard rough track under the feet.

Staffy: Mike Merrick the huckster has an apple garden bought against the harvest. He should likely be seeking for a dog. There do be little lads passing to the school.

Damer: He might want him, he might want him. (*He leans upon half-door.*)

Staffy: Is it that you are tired and wore out carrying the load of your wealth?

Damer: It is a bad load surely. It was the love of money destroyed Buonaparte where he went robbing a church, without the men of learning are telling lies.

Staffy: I would never go so far as robbery, but to bid it welcome I would, and it coming fair and easy into my hand.

Damer: There was a king out in Foreign went astray through the same sin. His people that made a mockery of him after his death, filling up his jaws with rendered gold. Believe me, any person goes coveting after riches puts himself under a bad master.

Staffy: That is a master I'd be willing to engage with, he to give me my victuals and my ease.

Damer: In my opinion it was to keep temptation from our path the gold of the world was covered under rocks and in the depths of the streams. Believe me it is best leave it where it is, and not to meddle with the Almighty.

Staffy: You'd be best without it. It is the weight of it is bowing you to your grave. When things are vexing your mind and you are trouble minded they'll be going through your head in the night time. There is a big shift and a great change in you since yesterday. There is not the half of you in it. You have the cut of the misfortune.

Damer: I am under misfortune indeed.

Staffy: Give over now your load to myself before the coming of the dusk. The way you are there 'll be nothing left of you within three days. There is no way with you but death.

Delia: (*To Ralph.*) Let you raise your voice now, and come around him on my own behalf.

Ralph: It is what herself is saying, you to be quitting the world as it seems, it is as good for you make over to her your crock of gold.

Damer: I would not wish, for all the glories of Ireland, to leave temptation in the path of my own sister or my kin, or to twist a gad for their neck.

Delia: (*To Ralph.*) Tell him I 'll chance it.

Damer: At the time of the judgment of the mountain, when the sun and moon will be all one with two blackberries, it is not being pampered with plenty will serve you, beside being great with the angels!

Delia: (*Shrinking back.*) I would as soon nearly not get it at all, where it might bring me to the wretched state of Damer! (*Dog heard barking.*)

Damer: I 'll go bring my poor Jubair out of this. A great sin and a great pity to be losing provision with a dog, and the image of the saints maybe to be going hungry and bare. How do I know what troop might be bearing witness against me before the gate of heaven? To be cherishing a ravenous beast might be setting his teeth in their

limbs! To give charity to the poor is the best religion in Ireland. Did n't our Lord Himself go beg through three and thirty years? (*He goes.*)

Delia: (*Coming forward.*) Will you believe me now telling you he is gone unsteady in the head?

Staffy: I see no other sign. He is a gone man surely. His understanding warped and turned backward. To see him blighted the way he is would stir the heart of a stone.

Ralph: He surely got some vision or some warning, or there lit on him a fit or a stroke.

Staffy: Twice a child and only once a man. He is turned to be innocent with age.

Ralph: It would be a bad thing he to meet with his death unknown to us.

Delia: It would be worse again he that is gone out of his latitude to be brought away to the asylum.

Ralph: I don't know.

Delia: But I know. He to die, and to make no will, it is ourselves, by rule and by right, that would lay claim to his wealth.

Staffy: So we could do that, and he to come to his end in the bad place, God save the mark!

Delia: Would you say there would be no fear the Government might stretch out and take charge of it, saying him to be outside of his reason?

Ralph: That would be the worst of all. We

to be forced to hire an attorney against them, till we would break one another at law.

Delia: He to be stopping here, and being light in the brain, it is likely some thief travelling the road might break his way in and sweep all.

Ralph: It would be right for us keep some sort of a watch on it.

Staffy: What way would we be sitting here watching it, the same as a hen on a pebble of flint, through a quarter or it might be three quarters of a year? He might drag for a good while yet, and live and linger into old days.

Delia: To take some cross turn he might, and to come at us violent and maybe tear the flesh from our bones.

Staffy: It is best for us do nothing so, but to leave it to the foreknowledge of God.

Delia: There is but the one thing to do. To bring it away out of this and to lodge it within in my own house. We can settle out a place under the hearth.

Staffy: We can make a right division of it at such time as the end will come.

Ralph: What way now will we bring away the crock?

Delia: Let you go outside and be watching the road while Staffy will be bringing out the gold.

Staffy: Ah, I 'm not so limber as what Ralph is. There does be giddiness and delay in my feet. It

might fail me to heave it to a hiding place and to bring it away unknownst.

Delia: Let you go out so and be keeping a watch, and Ralph will put it on the ass-car under sacks.

Ralph: Do it you. I am not of his own kindred and his family. Any person to get a sketch of me bringing it away they might nearly take myself to be a thief.

Delia: We are doing but what is fair and is right.

Ralph: Maybe so. But any neighbour to be questioning me, it might be hard put a skin on the story.

Delia: There is no person to do it but the one. (*Calls from the door.*) Come in here from the shed, Simon Niland, if the sluggishness is banished from your eyesight and from your limbs.

Simon: (*At door.*) I was thinking to go travel my road.

Delia: Have you any desire to reach out your hand for to save a mortal life?

Simon: (*Coming in.*) Whose life is that?

Staffy: The man of this house that is your uncle and is owner of wealth closed up in a jar. We now being wittier than himself, that has lost his wits, have our mind made up to bring it away.

Simon: Outside of his knowledge is it?

Staffy: It will be safe and well minded and

lodged in loyal keeping, it being no profit to him that is at this time shook and blighted, but only a danger to his days.

Delia: The seven senses to be going astray on him, what would ail any tramp or neuk would be passing the road, not to rob him and to lay him stone dead?

Staffy: Go in now and bring out from the room and to such place as we will command, that gallon jar of gold.

Ralph: It being certain it will be brought away from him, it is best it to be kept in the family, and not to go nourishing lawyers or thieves.

Simon: Is it to steal it I should?

Staffy: What way will it be stealing, and the whole of us to be looking on at your deed?

Simon: Ah, what call have I to do that much and maybe put myself in danger of the judge, for the sake of a man is without sense.

Delia: Let you do it for my own sake so. You heard me giving out news on yesterday of the white goats are on the bounds of being sold. The neighbours will give me no more credit, where they loaned me the price of a crested side car was auctioned out at a quality sale.

Ralph: Picking the eyes out of my own head they are, to pay the little bills they have against her.

Delia: I am no way greedy, I would ask neither

food or bite, I would not begrudge turning Sunday into Friday if I could but get my heart's desire. Such a thing now as a guinea-hen would be bringing fashion to the door, throwing it a handful of yellow meal, and it in its speckled plumage giving out its foreign call!

Simon: I have no mind to be brought within the power of the law.

Delia: You that are near in blood to refuse me so small an asking, what chance would I have sending requests to Heaven that is beyond the height of the clouds! (*Weeps.*)

Staffy: That 's the way with them that are reared poor, they are the hardest after to humour, striving to bring everything to their own way. But there 's a class of people in the world would n't do a hand's turn, no more than the bird upon the tree.

Ralph: I wonder you not to give in to us, when all the world knows God formed young people for to be giving aid to elder people, and beyond all to them that are near to them in blood.

Staffy: Look now, Simon, let you be said and led by me. - You having no great share of wisdom we are wishful to make a snug man of you and to put you on a right road. Go in now and you will not be kept out of your own profit and your share, and a harbour of plenty beyond all.

Simon: It might be guarded by a serpent in a

tree, or by unnatural things would be in the similitude of cats.

Staffy: Ah, that class is done away with this good while.

Ralph: There is no person having sense, but would take means, by hook or by crook, to make his pocket stiff and he to be given his fair chance. It is to save you from starvation we are wishful to do, as much as to bring profit to ourselves.

Staffy: You not to follow our say you will be brought to burn green ferns to boil your victuals, or to devour the berries of the bush.

Simon: I would not wish a head to follow me and leap up on the table and wrestle me, or to drink against me with its gory mouth.

Staffy: You that have not the substance of a crane's marrow, to go shrink from so small a bidding, let you go on the shaughraun or to the workhouse, where you would not take our advice.

Simon: I 'll go do your bidding so. I will go bring out the crock.

Staffy: There is my whiteheaded boy! I 'll keep a watch, the way Damer will not steal in on us without warning.

Ralph: He should have the key in some secret place. It is best for you give the lock a blow of your foot.

Simon: I 'll do that. (*He gives door a kick. It opens easily.*)

Delia: Was I right now saying Damer is turned innocent? Sure the door was not locked at all.

Simon: (*Dragging out jar.*) Here it is now.

Ralph: So it is and no mistake.

Staffy: There should be great weight in it.

Ralph: I am in dread it might work a hole down through the timber of the car.

Delia: Why would n't we open it here? It would be handier bringing it away in small divides.

Ralph: The way we would make sure of getting our own share at the last.

Delia: Let you draw out the cork from it.

Ralph: I don't know can I lift it. (*Stoops and lifts it easily.*) The Lord protect and save us! There is no weight in it at all!

Staffy: (*Seizing and shaking it.*) Not a one penny in it but clean empty. That beats all.

Delia: It is with banknotes it is stuffed that are deaf and do be giving out no sound. (*She pokes in a knitting pin.*) Nothing in it at all, but as bare as the canopy of heaven!

Ralph: There being nothing within in it, where now is the gold?

Staffy: Some person should have made away with it.

Delia: Some robber or some great rogue. A terrible thing such ruffians to be around in the

world! To turn and rob a poor man of all he had spared and had earned.

Staffy: They have done him a great wrong surely, taking from him all he had of comfort in his life.

Ralph: My grief it is there being no more hangings for thieves, that are worse again than murderers that might do their deed out of heat. It is thieving is the last crime.

Staffy: We to lay our hand on that vagabond we 'll give him cruelty will force him to Christian habits.

Ralph: Take care might he be nearer than what you think! (*He points at Simon. All look at him.*)

Staffy: Sure enough it is with himself only we found him on the hearth this morning.

Delia: He has n't hardly the intellect to be the thief.

Simon: I tell you I never since the day I was born could be charged with the weight of a brass pin!

Staffy: It is to Damer, my fine boy, you will have to make out your case.

Simon: So I will make it out. Where now is Damer?

Staffy: He is gone down the road, where he brought away Jubair the dog.

Simon: What are you saying? The dog gone is it? (*Goes to door.*)

Ralph: (*Taking hold of him.*) What makes you go out in such a hurry?

Simon: What is that to you?

Delia: What cause has he to be making a run?

Simon: Let me mind my own business.

Staffy: It is maybe our own business.

Simon: To make a search I must in that dog's kennel of straw.

Delia: Go out, Ralph, till you will bring it in.

(*Ralph goes out.*)

Staffy: (*Seizing him.*) A man to go rush out headlong and money after being stolen, I have no mind to let him make his escape.

Delia: If you are honest let you stop within and not to put a bad appearance upon yourself making off.

Simon: Let me out! I tell you I have a thing concealed in the box.

Staffy: A strange place to go hiding things and a queer story altogether.

Delia: Do not let go your hold. He to go out into the street, he has the wide world before him.

Ralph: (*Dragging kennel in.*) Here now is the box.

Simon: (*Breaking away and searching it.*) Where at all is it vanished?

Staffy: It is lies he was telling. There is nothing at all within in it only a wisp of barley straw.

Simon: Where at all is it?

Staffy: What is it is gone from you?

Simon: Not a one pound left!

Delia: Why would you look to find coins of money down in Jubair's bed?

Simon: It is there I hid it.

Staffy: What is it you hid?

Simon: All that was in the crock and that I took from it. Where now is my bag of gold?

Staffy: Do you hear what he is after saying?

Ralph: A lad of that sort will not be safe but in the gaol. Let us give him into the grip of the law.

Delia: No, but let the man owned it do that.

Staffy: So he can task him with it, and he drawing to the door.

Delia: (*Going to it.*) It is time for you, Patrick, come in.

(*Damer comes in dragging a sack.*)

Ralph: You are after being robbed and left bare.

Delia: Not a one penny left of all you have cast into its mouth.

Ralph: Herself made a prophecy you would be robbed with the weakening of your wits, and sure enough it has come about.

Delia: Not a tint of it left. What now do you say, hearing that?

Damer: (*Sitting down by the hearth and laying down sack.*) If it should go it must go. That was allotted to me in the skies.

Delia: Is it that you had knowledge ere this
of it being swept and lost?

Damer: If I had not, why would I have been
setting my mind upon eternity and striving to
bring to mind a few prayers? And to have parted
with my wicked dog?

Delia: Let you turn around till you will see
before you the man that is the robber and the thief!

Simon: Thief yourself! You that had a plan
made up to bring it away.

Damer: Delia, Delia, what was I laying down
a while ago? It is the love of riches has twisted
your heart and your mind.

Delia: Is it that you are contented to be made
this one's prey?

Damer: It was foretold for me. I to go stint
the body till I near put myself to death without
the Lord calling on me, and to lose every whole
pound after in one night's card playing.

Delia: Is it at cards you lost it?

Damer: With that same pack of cards you
laid out under my hand, I lost all I had gathered
to that one.

Staffy: Well, there is nothing so certain in the
world as the running of a fool to a fool.

Delia: Is it taking that lad you are to be a
fool? I thinking him to be as simple as you'd see
in the world, and he putting bread upon his own
butter as we slept!

Ralph: We to have known all then we know now, we need not have wasted on him our advice.

Damer: Give me, boy, one answer. What in the world wide put venture into you that made you go face the dog?

Simon: Ah, what venture? And he being as he is without teeth?

Damer: You know that, what no one in the parish or out of it ever found out till now! You should have put your hand in his jaw to know that much! A right lad you are and a lucky lad. I would nearly wish you of my own blood and of my race.

Delia: Of your own blood is it?

Damer: That is what I would wish.

Delia: Is it that you are taking Simon Niland to be a stranger?

Damer: What Simon Niland?

Delia: Your own nephew and only son to your sister Sarah.

Damer: Do you tell me so! What way did it fail me to recognise that, and he having daring and spirit the same as used to be rising up in myself in my early time?

Delia: He was born the very year of you coming into possession of this place.

Damer: The same year my luck turned against me, and every horse I would back would get the staggers on the course, or would fail to rise at the

leaps. All the strength of fortune went from me at that time, it is into himself it flowed and ran. The dead spit and image of myself he is. Stop with me here through the winter season and through the summer season! You to be in the house it is not an unlucky house will be in it. The Royalty of England and of Spain cannot touch upon yourself. I am prouder of you than if you wrote the wars of Homer or put down Turgesius of the Danes! You are a lad that can't be beat. It is you are the Lamb of Luck!

Staffy: What call has he or any of us to be stopping under Damer's roof and he owning but the four walls presently and a poor little valley of land?

Ralph: There is nothing worth while in his keeping, and all he had gathered after being robbed.

Damer: Is that what you are saying? Well, I am not so easy robbed as you think! (*Takes bag from the sack and shakes it.*) Is that what you call being robbed?

Simon: That is my treasure and my bag!

Staffy: I thought it was after being brought away from the two of you.

Damer: You are out of it! It is Jubair did that much for me. Jubair, my darling, it is to-night I 'll bring him back to the house! It is not in the box he will be any more but alongside the warmth of the hearth. The time I went unloosing

Damer's Gold

his chain, did n't he scrape with his paw till he showed me all I had lost hid in under the straw, and it in a spotted bag! (*Opens and pours out money.*)

Simon: It is as well for you have it back where it stopped so short with myself.

Damer: Is it that I would keep it from you where it was won fair? It is a rogue of a man would do that. Where would be the use, and I knowing you could win it back from me at your will, and the five trumps coming into your hand? It is to share it we will and share alike, so long as it will not give out!

Delia: A little handsel to myself would do the both of you no harm at all.

Damer: Delia, my darling, I 'll go as far as that on this day of wonders. I 'll handsel you and welcome. I 'll bestow on you the empty jar. (*Gives it to her.*)

Delia: I 'll take it. I 'll let on it to be weighty and I facing back into Loughyshassy.

Ralph: The neighbours seeing it and taking you to be his heir you might come to your goats yet.

Delia: Ah, what 's goats and what is guineahens? Did ever you see yoked horses in a coach, their skin shining out like shells, rising their steps in tune the same as a patrol of police? There are peacocks on the lawns of Lough Cutra they were telling me, having each of them a hundred eyes. (*Goes to door.*)

Simon: (*Putting his hand on the jar.*) I don't know. (*To Damer*) It might be a nice thing for the two of us to start gathering the full of it again.

Damer: Not a fear of me. Where heaping and hoarding that much has my years withered and blighted up to this, it is not to storing treasure in any vessel at all I will give the latter end of my days, or to working the skin off my bones. Give me here that coat. (*Puts it on.*) If I was tossed and racked a while ago I 'll show out good from this out. Come on now, out of this, till we 'll face to the races of Loughrea and of Knock-barron. I was miserable and starved long enough. (*Puts on hat.*) I 'm thinking as long as I 'll be living I 'll take my view of the world, for it 's long I 'll be lying when my eyes are closed and seeing nothing at all!

(*He seizes a handful of gold and puts it in Simon's pocket and another in his own.*
They turn towards the door.)

Curtain





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